WIKIPEDIA

Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo

Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo (Peltuinum c. 7 – 67 AD) was a popular Roman general, brother-in-law of the emperor Caligula and father-in-law of Domitian.[1] The emperor Nero, highly fearful of Corbulo's reputation, ordered him to commit suicide, which the general carried out faithfully, exclaiming "Axios", meaning "I am worthy", and fell on his own sword.



The so-called "Pseudo-Corbulo", once thought to be the portrait of Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo, actually a portrait of an unknown personage of the 1st century BC. Parian marble. (Centrale Montemartini, Rome)

Contents

Life
- Ancestry

Military and political career
- Reign of Caligula
- In Germania Inferior
- In the east
- Fall and death

Works

Marriage and issue

In popular culture

Notes

References

External links

Life

Ancestry

Corbulo was born somewhere on the Italian peninsula into a senatorial family. His father, who shared the same name, entered the Senate as a formal praetor under Tiberius. His mother Vistilia came from a family which held the praetorship.[2]

Military and political career

Reign of Caligula

Corbulo's early career is unknown but he was suffect consul in 39 AD during the reign of Caligula,[3] his brother-in-law through Caligula's marriage to Corbulo's half-sister Milonia Caesonia.

In Germania Inferior

After Caligula's assassination, Corbulo's career came to a halt until, in 47 AD, the new Emperor Claudius made him commander of the armies in Germania Inferior, with a base camp in *Colonia* (Cologne).



Statue of Corbulo in Voorburg, Netherlands

The new assignment was a difficult one and Corbulo had to deal with major rebellions by the Germanic Cherusci and Chauci tribes. During his stay in Germania, the general ordered the construction of a canal between the rivers Rhine and Meuse.[4] Parts of this engineering work, known as *Fossa Corbulonis* or Corbulo's Canal, have been found at archeological digs. Its course is about identical to the modern-day Vliet canal, which connects the modern towns of Leiden (ancient Matilo) and Voorburg (Forum Hadriani). Upon reaching lower Germania, Corbulo employed both the army and naval squadrons of the fleet patrolling the Rhine and North Sea, eventually expelling the Chauci away from the Roman Provinces and instituting a rigorous training program in order to ensure maximum effectiveness of his legions. He supposedly executed two legionaries after they were found to have laid aside their swords when labouring in the construction of fortifications on a marching camp.[5] Corbulo is said to have said, "You defeat the enemy with a pickaxe."[6]

In the east

Corbulo returned to Rome, where he stayed until 52 AD, when he was named governor of the province of Asia. Following Claudius' death in 54 AD, the new emperor Nero sent him to the eastern provinces to deal with the Armenian question. After some delay, and reinforced by troops from Germania, in 58 AD he took the offensive, and attacked Tiridates, King of Armenia and brother of Vologases I of Parthia. Artaxata and Tigranocerta were captured by his legions (III *Gallica*, VI *Ferrata*, and X *Fretensis*), and Tigranes, who had been brought up in Rome and was an obedient servant of the government, was installed as king of Armenia.

In 61 AD Tigranes invaded Adiabene, an integral portion of the Parthian Kingdom, and a conflict between Rome and Parthia seemed unavoidable. Instead Vologases thought it better to come to terms. It was agreed that both Roman and Parthian troops should evacuate Armenia, that Tigranes should be dethroned, and the rule of Tiridates recognized. The Roman government declined to accede to these arrangements, and Lucius Caesennius Paetus, governor of Cappadocia, was ordered to settle the question by bringing Armenia under direct Roman administration.

The protection of Syria claimed all of Corbulo's attention in the meantime. Paetus, a weak and incapable commander who "despised the fame acquired by Corbulo", suffered a severe defeat at Rhandeia in 62 AD, where he was surrounded and forced to capitulate to the Parthians and evacuated to Armenia. Command was again entrusted to Corbulo. In 63 AD, with a strong army, he crossed the Euphrates. Tiridates declined to give battle and arranged a peace. At Rhandea he laid down his diadem at the foot of the emperor's statue, promising not to resume it until he received it from the hand of Nero himself in Rome.

Fall and death

After two failed plots by noblemen and senators, including Corbulo's son-in-law, the senator Lucius Annius Vinicianus, to overthrow Nero in 62 AD, Nero became suspicious of Corbulo and his support among the Roman masses. In 67 AD disturbances broke out in Judaea and Nero, ordering Vespasian to take command of the Roman forces, summoned Corbulo, as well as two brothers who were the governors of Upper and Lower Germany, to Greece. On his arrival at Cenchreae, the port of Corinth, messengers from Nero met Corbulo and ordered him to commit suicide. Undaunted, he strode forward to accept his fate, and fell on his own sword after exclaiming, *"Axios!"*"[7], meaning "I am worthy!"

Works

Corbulo wrote a now-lost account of his Asiatic experiences.

Marriage and issue

Corbulo married Cassia Longina, the daughter of Gaius Cassius Longinus, consul of 30, and his wife Junia Lepida,[8] a great-great granddaughter of Augustus. Cassia bore Corbulo two daughters. The elder daughter, Domitia, married the senator Lucius Annius Vinicianus, and their second daughter, Domitia Longina, married the future Emperor Domitian.

In popular culture

- The 2012 live-action video web series *Forward Unto Dawn* takes place in the fictional Corbulo Academy of Military Science,[9] which is named for the Roman general. The academy's motto is "Axios", Corbulo's famous final utterance.
- The 2012 historical novel, *Avenger of Rome*, by Douglas Jackson, deals with the fictional last battle of Corbulo.
- Two of Simon Scarrow's Eagles of the Empire series, *The Blood of Rome* (2018) and *Traitors of Rome* (2019) feature Corbulo's involvement in the East.

Notes

1. https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/daily/military-history/roman-generals-gnaeus-domitius-corbulo/
2. Ronald Syme, "Domitius Corbulo" (https://www.jstor.org/stable/299411), *Journal of Roman Studies*, 60 (1970), p. 31
3. Paul A. Gallivan, "The Fasti for the Reign of Gaius", *Antichthon*, 13 (1974), p. 66
4. Tacitus Annales XI 20.
5. Goldsworthy, Adrian (2003). *In the Name of Rome: The men who won the Roman Empire*. Great Britain: Orion Publishing Group. p. 268. ISBN 0-297-84666-3.
6. Strauss, Barry S. *The Spartacus War*. Simon & Schuster, 2009.
7. "The game of death in ancient Rome: arena sport and political suicide" (https://books.google.com/books?id=O2VxRfd68F4C&pg=PA131&lpg=PA131&dq=Corbulos+last+words&source=bl&ots=dZ2AhwZZ7U&sig=euN-uejfn6vuI1JFy4LZXfSYjbw&hl=en&ei=Od3nStzLGsWOjAeEpfC2CA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5&ved=0CBQQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=axios&f=false)
8. Syme, "Domitius Corbulo", pp. 36f
9. "Halopedia: Corbulo Academy of Military Science" (http://www.halopedia.org/Corbulo_Academy_of_Military_Science)

References

- This article incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Corbulo, Gnaeus Domitius". *Encyclopædia Britannica*. **7** (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. pp. 136–137.
- *Military History,* Vol. 23, Number 5, p. 47–53

External links

- Livius.org: Corbulo (https://www.livius.org/do-dz/domitius/corbulo.html)
- Livius.org: Corbulo's Canal (https://www.livius.org/ga-gh/germania/corbulonis.html)

Political offices		
Preceded by **Quintus Sanquinius Maximus,** **and Lucius Apronius Caesianus** ***as Suffect consuls***	**Suffect consul of the Roman Empire** 39 *with **ignotus***	Succeeded by **Aulus Didius Gallus,** **and Gnaeus Domitius Afer** ***as Suffect consuls***

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gnaeus_Domitius_Corbulo&oldid=947482025"

This page was last edited on 26 March 2020, at 16:09 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.